

The Friends of Pontoosuc Lake

Pontoosuc Lake News

Volume 4, Issue 2

Summer 2003



Who to Call with Your Concerns About Pontoosuc Lake

*In Pittsfield, call your City Councilors:

Robert Tuttle (Ward 1)
448-6162.

Joe Guzzo (Ward 7)
499-1673.

*Call the Pittsfield Dept. of Public Works with your concerns about the weed harvesting program, 499-9314. Call the Parks Dept. about the parks or beaches, 499-9343.

*In Lanesborough, call Paul Boudreau, Town Administrator 442-0965.

*Call your legislators:

Sen. Andrea Nuciforo, 442-6810.

Rep. Peter Larkin, 448-8714.

*The Friends of Pontoosuc Lake Board of Directors:

Lee Hauge, 442-6691.

Michele Rivers Murphy, 443-7881.

Ron Tinkham, 448-8370.

Gordon Zaks, 499-4680.

Bev Brown, 443-5985.

Tim Coe, 448-5304.

Dan Miraglia, 442-3568.

Michael Passardi, 448-2797.

Amy Pfeufer, 442-1521.

Carolyn Sibner, 445-4430.

Carole Siegel, 443-5445.

FRIENDS OF PONTOOSUC LAKE'S ANNUAL MEETING, April 28, 2003

Sixty people attended our annual meeting at the ITAM Lodge on Monday, April 28th, to participate in planning activities for the coming summer. Several volunteers were signed up to help with lake management tasks such as water quality monitoring, macrophyte (weed) surveys, preparing newsletters, etc. The agenda covered the value of water quality monitoring, as discussed by Bob Race. The on-going grant programs including the \$24,000 grant received from the Berkshire Environmental Fund was presented by Amy Pfeufer of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. The ratification of the "Articles of Organization" and "by-laws" to make the Friends of Pontoosuc Lake/Watershed, Inc. a non-profit organization was presented by member Bill Yeats (thank you, Bill, we greatly appreciate all your hard work!) The membership unanimously ratified the documents. This enables us to take the next step to becoming a non-profit organization.

The highlight of the program was a presentation by Tom Foody, (Supervisor of the Pittsfield Department of Public Works, in charge of weed harvesting), who explained the status of the weed harvesting program. Tom said the DPW mechanics were working on the three weed harvesters, hydro rake, two trucks, and high speed barge, (not used in several years), and they would all be in fine shape and ready to go by June 1st. Training of the half dozen or so staff to do the cutting would begin at the end of May. Tom expressed the importance of the program, and the City's commitment to getting two cuttings done, one in June and one in August. Tom received total support and an enthusiastic ovation from the meeting attendees.

Elections were held and officers and directors (who are listed on the left of this page) were elected for the next year. The only changes from the previous year are Gordon Zaks became the clerk, Carolyn Sibner moved from clerk to director, and Tim Coe was newly elected as a director.



Geared Up for the Weed Harvesting Season

The weed harvesting program got off to an early start this year. A tour of the lake by the Friends of Pontoosuc Lake and Pittsfield DPW's Weed Program personnel was completed in the spring, the equipment has been refurbished, and the staff trained. A full attack of the weeds began in early June. Financial funding has been assured with Pittsfield's commitment to the program and the Lanesborough Town Meeting approval of the funds required in Lanesborough. The equipment to be utilized is listed below. The program is being coordinated by Pittsfield DPW's Tom Foody.

- 800 machine = primary, deep cutter.
- 700 machine = secondary cutter.
- 400 machine = cleans shore areas.
- Hydraulic Rake = cleans beaches / dam areas.
- High Speed Barge = transports weeds to shore.
- Shore Conveyor = mechanically loads weeds from barge to trucks.
- Weed removal trucks = carry the weeds offsite to be composted.
- Transporting equipment = carries the machines from lake to lake.

Ron Tinkham



The high-speed barge

DON'T FEED THE LAKE'S WEEDS WITH YOUR LAWN FERTILIZER

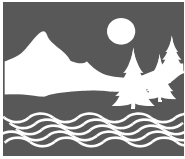
Lake weeds need phosphate to flourish, and reducing phosphate concentrations in the lake would help our weed problem. A major source of the phosphate in Pontoosuc Lake is lawn fertilizer contained in storm water runoff. Everyone in the watershed, and especially those near the lake, should avoid using fertilizers containing phosphate.

Fertilizers are characterized by three numbers which are the percentages of Nitrogen (N), Phosphate (P), and Potassium (K) which they contain. A typical lawn fertilizer has a rating of 29 (N)-3 (P)-4 (K). This typical fertilizer has 3% phosphate, and if it washes into the lake, it feeds the weed population.

Fortunately, companies do formulate fertilizers which contain no phosphate. In fact, Minnesota has made selling or using lawn fertilizers containing phosphate illegal, in order to protect their lakes. Locally it is possible to buy phosphate-free fertilizer at the Pittsfield Agway store. They carry a Urea fertilizer with a formulation of 46(N)-0(P)-0(K). The cost is \$14 for a fifty pound bag. This is a fairly inexpensive source of nitrogen, and our lawns primarily need nitrogen. I have used phosphate-free fertilizer on my lawn and it seems to work as well as those containing phosphate. If enough of us request it, other suppliers will also carry this type of fertilizer.

Agway will also sell this fertilizer for \$9.50 a bag in 40 bag quantities. If someone would volunteer a storage facility we could buy it in bulk and either pass the savings on to users, or make a profit for our organization. Call me if you are interested.

Lee Hauge



BE "A FRIEND" BY JOINING THE FRIENDS OF PONTOOSUC LAKE!

Are you (please check):

A New Member _____

Renewing for '03 _____

INDIVIDUAL FRIEND _____	\$5.00	BIG FISH _____	\$50.00
FAMILY OF FRIENDS _____	\$10.00	REALLY BIG FISH _____	\$75.00
BEST FRIEND _____	\$25.00	WORLD RECORD FISH! _____	\$100.00
NAME _____ HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____			
ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____			
LAKE ADDRESS _____ EMAIL _____			
AREA OF INTEREST, OR EXPERTISE _____			

✂✂✂✂ Cut off and return with your check payable to The Friends of Pontoosuc Lake, c/o Ron Tinkham, 59 Sunrise St, Rt. 44, Pittsfield, 01201 ✂✂✂✂

WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM

The water quality monitoring program for Pontoosuc lake has been revitalized. John Hickey and Dave Francoeur have volunteered to be responsible for it. An initial training session was held on Saturday May 24 with the help of Bob Race of Onota Lake, and Gene Chague of LAPA-West. (It was a cold, rainy day!) Measurements were made of water clarity, total phosphate, temperature and dissolved oxygen profiles. This program is essential for tracking the condition of the lake over time and as a precursor to obtaining grant funding and evaluating the effects of actions taken to remedy problems with the lake. If you would like to help with this critical effort, contact John (442-6713) or me (442-6691).

Lee Hauge



The shore conveyor



Carolyn Sibner, Editor
98 Oliver Ave.
Pittsfield, MA 01201

WEED SURVEYs and IDENTIFICATION TRAINING

On June 2nd, if you noticed two boats lashed together as they spent the day coursing around the lake, then you saw FOPL members and volunteers Gordon Zaks and John Hickey as they were being instructed, by Bob Hartzel of GeoSyntex, in how to conduct a weed survey.

Bob showed them the five dominant weed species that inhabit Pontoosuc Lake: Curly Leaf Pond Weed, Eurasian Milfoil, Nejaia or Bushy Pond Weed, Elodia, and Coon Tail. Also, he was demonstrating how to determine weed density and biomass, which are two critical factors in determining weed conditions.

Future weed surveys by FOPL will rank the four levels of weed densities, which are 0-25%, 25-50%, 50-75% and 75-100%. The good news from this survey was that for the most part weed densities were found to be at level 1, with a few 2's.

The biomass measurement ranks the extent to which a section or column is filled with the weed growth. Here again the same 1 to 4 ranking is used to define biomass, and most rankings in Pontoosuc Lake fell in category 1, with a few 2's.

A draft copy of Bob Hartzel's June 2nd survey was to be ready for the June 21st LAPA Directors' Meeting at Onota Lake, where Bob conducted some additional training.

In early July, Gordon and John will undertake a second weed survey coursing over the same areas that Bob covered on June 2nd. Bob Hartzel will return to Pontoosuc Lake in early August for a follow up survey, and the FOPL volunteers will survey the weeds again in September and October.

John Hickey



The hydro-rake